

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 /040 W
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R 011143Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8349
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2507

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS ET
SUBJECT: DEBRIEFING OF RECENT DETAINEE

1. EMBASSY OFFICER DEBRIEFED ERITREAN BUSINESSMAN LIVING
IN ADDIS WHO HAD BEEN DETAINED FOR ONE WEEK ENDING FEB 26.
SUBJECT, WHO IS SECRETARY TO AN AMERICAN SPORTS CLUB, WAS
SWEPT UP IN RECENT WAVE OF ARRESTS. HE WAS ARRESTED AT
GUNPOINT AND CLUBBED WITH RIFLE BUTT WHEN HE ASKED WHY HE
WAS BEING ARRESTED.

2. HE WAS TAKEN TO THIRD POLICE STATION IN ADDIS WHERE
HE WAS THREATENED AND INTERROGATED DAILY BY BOTH UNIFORMED
AND CIVILIAN OFFICERS. BEING ERITREAN, HE WAS QUESTIONED
CLOSELY ON HIS CONTACTS WITH THE ELF AND ACCUSED OF HAVING
GIVEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE INSURGENTS. HE WAS THEN
QUESTIONED ON POSSIBLE CONTACTS WITH THE ETHIOPIAN
DEMOCRATIC UNION AND ACCUSED OF ASSISTING THE EDU AND
OTHER ANTI-GOVERNMENT FORCES. HE WAS ALSO QUESTIONED
BRIEFLY ON HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH AMERICAN INSTRUCTOR
IN THE SPORTS CLUB.

3. SECURITY OFFICIALS WERE APPARENTLY SATISFIED WITH
SUBJECT'S ANSWERS AND RELEASED HIM AFTER SEVEN DAYS,
AFTER WARNING HIM THAT HE WOULD BE CLOSELY WATCHED AND
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THAT HE WAS NOT TO DISCUSS HIS IMPRISONMENT WITH ANYONE.

SUBJECT OPINED THAT APPROXIMATELY 2,000 PEOPLE HAD BEEN
DETAINED IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF WHICH APPROXIMATELY 10
PERCENT, HE THOUGHT, HAD NOW BEEN RELEASED. SUBJECT WAS
RELEASED ALONG WITH AN AIR FORCE LIEUTENANT, (IN UNIFORM),
A RETIRED UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, A STUDENT, AND A BUSINESSMAN.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST DEBRIEFING OF ONE OF THE
RECENT DETAINEES. IT WOULD SEEM TO CONFIRM THAT AT LEAST
A PART OF THE PURPOSE OF THE RECENT WAVE OF ARRESTS IS TO
UNCOVER ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY AND/OR BREAK UP RUMORED
COUP PLOT. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF NUMBER OF DETAINEES
BUT DEPT WILL HAVE SEEN REPORT THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS
INDICATING THAT POSSIBLY AS MANY AS 1700 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN
ARRESTED.

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